



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 12/08/2010

Arlington Tree Committee Meeting Minutes December 8, 2010

Attendees: Sally Naish, chair, Andrew Fischer, Ed Trembly, Mary Ellen Aronow, Eliza Burden, Walther Phillips, Greg Watt, Clarissa Rowe, Corinna Vanderspek, Patti Muldoon - minutes

The meeting opened at 6 pm, moving from the ice-cold Selectmen's hearing room to the 2nd floor annex and eventually to the 3rd floor conference room. Last month's minutes were approved.

Jimmy Dodge couldn't be at the meeting because he was dealing with a sewer break. Clarissa talked with him earlier and reported the following. The latest projections show a \$6.3 million deficit for the Town; almost half of that is structural. Since 1988 when Prop. 2 ? came in, there are now 10 unfilled positions in the Tree / Cemetery division. Last year the DPW cut down 450 trees; they planted an unknown number, 1/3 of which died. The DPW doesn't keep a record of the location of the trees they plant, except on paper. It was unclear whether trees were planted in addition to ones requested by residents and whether any were watered.

The DPW may not have any staff to plant trees during 2011. Jimmy and his assistant Jean have a list of people who have requested trees, but don't know how many requests have come in. Jimmy would like to have the Tree Committee actually organize the planting of the trees. He is thinking about contracting the planting to a local tree-care company. He is also considering getting high school students or students from Minuteman (do they still have a horticultural program?) to do the planting. Sally would like to use certified arborists.

Policy Setting Process: The Tree Committee recommends to Jimmy, who then recommends to Selectmen.

TREE PLANTING PROCESS

History: According to Jean, in recent years Jimmy would usually select about 3 varieties - red maple, flowering pear, etc. - for spring planting and order about 50 of each from a nursery in VT. (Sally has their catalog.) Bare root trees, which need to be put right in the ground, arrive in March.

Gators: Tree gators hold 15 or 20 gals. Filling them twice a week is sufficient for new plantings. Each gator costs about \$20. Some were used by the Town last year. Can we recoup the cost of a gator from residents requesting a tree?

Need page on town website for tree request. Tell resident to stand across the street from planting site and take photo; then send us the photo with the request. We should put pictures of species with suggestions about preferred location on the request page. Let people suggest species, but Tree Committee or DPW goes out to review site and make determination?

A version of the commitment below should be included for online and for verbal requests that Jean gets from residents who don't use a computer:

"I promise to water any tree provided by the Town at my request. This means I will ensure that a new tree gets 30-

40 gallons of water a week for its first year until the ground freezes, either by rain or watering provided by me, a household member or neighbor. After the first year I plan to continue to ensure its viability by watering during dry spells."

Signed _____ Dated _____

Tree requests should be in by January. We will not solicit requests this year.

SITING

Questions to ask residents: What kind of tree would you prefer? Do you have overhead wires at the site? Is the location on your front lawn within 10 feet of the street or is it between the sidewalk and street? Was a tree at this location before? What else can you tell us about the site?

Site evaluation will need to be done by someone on the committee. This may be possible using Google Earth, rather than on-site visits.

SPECIES SELECTION: Choose trees that start easily. Sally will check VT nursery catalog and review suggestions. Suggestions include: Princeton Elm, Thornless Hawthorne, Red Maple, Black Tupelo, Tulip Tree (very tall), European Hornbeam (slow growth and little canopy), male Sweet Gum. Must consider shorter species for under wires. Ed will check into Harrisville Elm.

POLICY MATTER - DEFINE STREET TREE: A tree planted on street side of sidewalk is clearly included. Can we include trees planted within 10-12 feet of the street if planted by Town? Ownership issue determines who is responsible for pruning, maintenance and removal. Clarissa will ask Town Counsel about ownership issue. Corinna will check into Lexington policy.

PLANTING PLANS

- Recruit landscaping crews to plant the trees: Ed will call Minuteman Tech, Arlington Catholic, & Arlington High. Greg will call Dearborn Academy.
- Document residents' requests.
- Develop database with recommended species.
- Place order with VT nursery for bare root trees to arrive in March.
- Tree Day in early April: planting demonstration and seminar. Requestors should be strongly encouraged to attend seminar.
- Arbor Day or Earth Day: community planting.
- Resource distribution: "How to plant" videos, training session, website, handout.
- Do a tree tour or tree treasure hunt in the spring/summer - for kids, possible fundraiser.

NSTAR: Jimmy is not going to let NSTAR back in Town to prune trees. We will have problems when we have an ice storm and we do have trees that need pruning.

WEBSITE: Need volunteers to provide info for different sections. Had meeting with Alan Jones and now have a WordPress template set up - a blog type structure with 5 main sections.

Homepage to show mission, goals, current news

Contributors:

Sally: general info about trees and tree resources, Trees Please (add later),

Ed and Eliza: Arlington's tree procedures and regs;

Clarissa and Patti will create a request-a-tree page.

Clarissa will talk with Jimmy about the oral history of Arlington's trees and call Theresa DeBenedictis, DPW Deputy Director for info on Tree City.

Email your assigned info to Sally

Old website: www.ArlingtonTrees.org, which will become new website. New template:

www.ArlingtonTrees.wordpress.com. Will ask Joan Roman to put link for our new website on Town website.

Some notable Arlington trees are listed on old website - e.g. huge Katsura on Walnut St.

TREE REMOVAL: Firewood is available from street trees that have been cut down. Currently the Town pays to

dispose of the wood. So we should put on website list of residents who would like to get cut trees for firewood.

TREES PLEASE: We have about \$7000 in Trees Please account. To make contributions to it: right now money goes to Theresa DeBenedictis on Grove St and Jimmy deposits it with Town. Clarissa would like to try to get a better method directly through the Treasurer's office. Arlington Garden Club has contributions. Clarissa suggests hiring a professional tree care company to water trees. Ed suggests a water trailer, the likes of which he owns, to water orphan trees (not adopted by homeowners.) We don't know what future needs will be.

Andrew will contact Cindy Freedman, Se. Donnelly's office, to file a state bill on requiring utilities to use certified arborists and/or use prevailing wages when pruning trees.

Next meeting: January 12th, 6pm, location to be confirmed.